

## AFFECTS OF MULTIPLE DEPLOYMENTS ON FAMILIES

BY

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**AFFECTS OF MULTIPLE DEPLOYMENTS ON FAMILIES**

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

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At the strategic level, balancing the military force structure, maintaining equipment, and properly supporting its family members has not been easy for the United States Army. Ongoing combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan continue to put an enormous amount of stress on its Soldiers and their families. Many soldiers joined the military in search of a brighter future for themselves and their families, but in some cases had not expected the spike in the military's operational tempo to remain at this high rate for such a long period of time.

The efforts to sustain continuous combat operations abroad have evolved into a military stretched too thin and one contributing to significant hardships on family members. The military now has service members at all levels facing their second, third and in some cases fourth deployment in a span of six years, with deployment rotations not expected to reduce anytime soon.





## AFFECTS OF MULTIPLE DEPLOYMENTS ON FAMILIES

At the strategic level for the U.S. Army, balancing the military force structure, maintaining equipment, and properly supporting its family members has not been easy. Ongoing combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan continue to put an enormous amount of stress on its service members and families. As a former Battalion Commander who served fifteen months in Iraq, countless conversations and counseling's took place with Soldiers and family members as to why they had joined the military. In many cases, Soldiers joined the military in search of a brighter future for themselves and their family. It was discovered during those counseling's that many had not considered the military's operational tempo and the affect it could potentially have on them as an American Soldier, as well as their family members.

The Army is comprised of Soldiers at all levels, now facing their third and in some cases fourth deployment in a span of six years. Commanders at each of those same levels witness firsthand the successes and struggles of deployments on Soldiers and their families, while supporting the mission of fighting the Global War on Terror (GWOT). The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have increased the operational tempo and deployment demands exponentially on Soldiers to a level not experienced since the Vietnam War. "As our country's operational commitments have increased throughout the world, military families are now often faced with deployments in more rapid succession. In many situations, it is unknown when the deployment will end, increasing the anxiety and uncertainty for military families. Whereas the previous emotional cycles of deployment may have allowed for a period between deployments of 18 months to 2

years, some military families are now facing another deployment of the service member within 9-12 months of the member's return."<sup>1</sup>

Many units redeploy from combat zones only to immediately begin the process to deploy again. In many cases, units that return from Iraq and Afghanistan receive deployment orders to deploy again six months after redeploying. The Army's current deployment cycle is designed to provide Soldiers assigned to these units with twelve months of stability to reconnect with their families and regain some sense of normalcy in their lives. Although it appears as though Soldiers and families will receive twelve months together, the deployment process actually provides only nine months. The increase in work hours and mandatory training requirements necessary for deployment must be taken into consideration because in most cases pre-deployment training will begin approximately 90 days prior to the unit's actual deployment date.

The increase in work hours for service members and the separation incurred from leaving their families behind as they head off to the National Training Center (NTC) and other similar facilities for training, starts the deployment cycle 90 days prior to the units actual deployment date into theater. Families of service members serving in the military contribute years of selfless sacrifice in support of their warrior and the great nation of the United States, but multiple deployments have begun to take their toll on families as the military continues to fight the GWOT. Additional concerns at the strategic level are the affects multiple deployments have not only on the active military force, but service members and families serving in the National Guard and Reserves. Service and family members in all components of the United States armed forces are experiencing the increased stresses of multiple deployments since September 11<sup>th</sup>,

2001, to include single service members, single parents, dual military, active duty, Reserve and National Guard. The frequency of deployment of military service members has increased in the past ten years. This is largely due to their increased involvement in a variety of Stability Operations, as well as actual combat scenarios. Deployments offer varying levels of challenges to military families. In families where medical or emotional/behavior problems preexist the deployment of a military parent can destabilize a tenuous situation, creating a significant ordeal for the family.<sup>2</sup>

Multiple deployments are resulting in a reduction of the force structure as experienced Non-Commission Officers and Junior Commissioned Officers depart the military through the manifestation of early retirements or simply leave the military as their service obligation expires. Although the military has established numerous incentive packages for junior level leaders, it continues to struggle in retaining junior officers particularly at the Captains level today. "The Army must increase company grade officer retention to keep up with the growth, said Paul Boyce, an Army spokesman. We must reduce the rate of captains departing long term if we are to sustain the growth needed to meet future requirements."<sup>3</sup>

Children of servicemen and women are greatly affected by deployments due to the separation from their parent(s). The impact multiple deployments have on children is one of the more visible hardships family members are faced with during lengthy deployments. "Certainly, the nature of the deployment and the role of the service member in the military action can have a significant impact on children and family left behind. For example, the deployment of a service member on a scheduled peacekeeping mission rotation is likely to be experienced very differently than the

deployment of a service member in a wartime scenario.”<sup>4</sup> Although deployments are not new to the military, it is the operational tempo that has changed, causing a negative affect that is impacting family members today. Even though most military families have accepted this as part of the job, family members may respond somewhat differently. The emotional cycle of deployment is described as being divided into five distinct stages: Pre-deployment; deployment; sustainment; redeployment; and post-deployment. Each stage is characterized by the time frame associated with it as well as specific emotional challenges that must be addressed and mastered.<sup>5</sup> This SRP will explore how multiple deployments affect families in relation to family separation, divorce, and retention. Additionally, the intent of this paper is to provide recommendations and policy changes deemed necessary to reduce the impact of repeated deployments on families as their loved one’s phase in and out of their lives, supporting a cause much greater than themselves.

### Family Separation

One of the most significant impacts of any deployment is the separation of families from the service member. The impacts are magnified through multiple deployments. When a service member deploys, their family deploys as well. Although not in a physical sense, they deploy mentally and are left behind to deal with a host of uncertainties for the duration of the service member’s deployment. More than half of current U.S. service members are married. There are currently at least 1.85 million children with one or both parents in the military (1.2 million with parents in the active duty component and 650,000 with parents in the reserve component). Further, 1.64 million service members have been deployed with the average length of deployments

being 12-15 months, and the average number of deployments per service member being 2.2. As a result, many family members are affected, and there is a need for information about the impact of deployments on them.<sup>6</sup> After the service member leaves (deploys), the family experiences mixed emotions of anger, relief, disorientation, feeling overwhelmed, grief, sadness, and loneliness. During this phase, family members may also have difficulty sleeping.<sup>7</sup>

Most research on the impact of deployment has focused on spouses and children of service members deployed during operation Desert Storm or earlier conflicts. Unfortunately, deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan have much different characteristics than previous deployments of the U.S. military. The operational tempo of the current conflicts is unparalleled for the U.S. military's all-volunteer force. Deployments are longer, and breaks between deployments are short and infrequent. Thus, studies of the impact of deployment on military families in the context of other deployments may have limited relevance for the families of service members deploying to Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom (OIF/OEF).<sup>8</sup> Military spouses who remain on the home front often consider if they will relocate to be near extended family or allow extended family members to come and live with them, in order to help deal with possible mood or behavioral challenges with their children while the service member is deployed.

Encouraging family members to become part of a support network or Family Readiness Group (FRG) will enable them to successfully cope with the absence of their spouse. Child care assistance that is organized to provide the military spouse or caretaker with a few hours of personal down time during deployments has shown to be vital for the service member on the battlefield to remain engaged and mission focused.

According to findings of a pilot study conducted by the RAND Center for Military Health Policy Research, Operation Purple Camp, caregivers for children of a deployed parent reported levels of child emotional and behavioral difficulties that were higher than those reported by parents/caregivers in the general population. Therefore, the extra personal time the parent or caretaker is able to spend away from them helps the parent re-charge and better cope with those emotional and behavioral difficulties.<sup>9</sup>

Also one group of researchers conducted focus groups in order to understand the adaptations made by adolescents during their parents' deployment in OIF/OEF. They reported changes in the relationship with the deployed parent, concern and anxiety about the deployed parent's well-being, increases in responsibility and demonstrations of maturity in caring for younger siblings and completing household chores, bonding with younger siblings, changes in daily routine due to transportation or financial reasons, and worse performance in school. Focus group participants also indicated feelings consistent with the symptoms of depression, hiding their feelings, lashing out in anger, disrespecting parents and teachers, and worrying about the deployed parent. The intensity of these behaviors ranged from slight to severe, some of which required counseling or therapy. Other research conducted by the Rand Corporation found that adolescent dependents of military members that had been deployed to Iraq during OIF in 2003 had significantly higher levels of perceived stress, systolic blood pressure, and heart rate than the civilian control group. The author also suggested that this youth population should be closely monitored during wartime and that stress-reducing interventions for this population should be evaluated.<sup>10</sup>

Service members experience hardships as well while deployed, which may affect family members upon their return. For example, service members endure strenuous training activities and physical challenges, long working hours and an intense working pace, infrequent breaks and little time off, close quarters and a lack of privacy, extreme environmental conditions, uncertainty and exposure to danger, and separation from family and friends. Many service members also experience intense trauma, such as witnessing injury or death of friends and/or noncombatants, hand-to-hand combat, explosions and resulting blast injuries, and exposure to decomposing bodies.<sup>11</sup>

The RAND study uses a deployment cycle which consists of five stages and mirrors that of the new emotional cycles of deployment for service members and their families previously mentioned. The stage of pre-deployment generally brings heightened anticipation of loss, as well as denial that the service member is actually leaving. The service member will often train for long hours while simultaneously trying to get the family's affairs in order. The resulting stress may stimulate an increase in arguments between the service member and spouse. Children may also feel the effects of the stress and act out, have tantrums, and demonstrate regressive behaviors. Service members often view the pre-deployment phase as an extension of deployment due to the high levels of stress felt by themselves as well as their family members.<sup>12</sup>

The deployment itself is viewed as the shock and awe phase when service members depart, leaving families to readjust to a new way of life without them. "The sustainment phase is the phase during which the family adjusts to the service member's absence and develops new routines and ways of living. The family may begin to feel more in control of the situation and less overwhelmed. Although modern technology

has improved this area, communication with the service member may still be difficult as a result of the unreliability and other limitations of email and long-distance forms of communication. During the sustainment phase children may react based on their stage of development. Infants may refuse to eat or become enervated (i.e., losing energy). Toddlers tend to mimic their adult caregivers' reactions to the deployment and may cry, throw tantrums, and exhibit irritability and sadness. Preschoolers may display regressive behavior, irritation, sadness, and aggressiveness and may have somatic complaints. School-age children may also complain of body aches, whine, and display aggression. Teenagers are likely to isolate themselves, display irritation, rebel, fight, and may engage more frequently in risky behaviors.<sup>13</sup>

The redeployment phase provides mixed emotions for service and family members as they prepare to reunite after a long deployment. During the month prior to the service members return (re-deployment), the family is anxious in anticipation of the homecoming and may experience conflicting emotions of excitement and apprehension in preparation for the return of the family member. When the service member returns (post-deployment) and begins to reintegrate, there may be stress as a result of the necessary adjustments and changes in routines. Focused groups among reservists found that less than half of the participants reported a honeymoon period (time of heightened joy and well-being) occurring at the time of return followed by a decline in well-being shortly after. Infants may be unfamiliar with the returned parent and may cry when held. Toddlers may also be hesitant to be affectionate with the returned parent. Preschoolers may feel scared or angry. School-age children may crave attention from the returned parent(s) while teenagers may isolate themselves.<sup>14</sup>



In addition, the Rand study provided information which assessed the psychosocial profiles of children aged 5-12 years old during parental deployment and found that 32% had Pediatric Symptom Checklist scores in the high risk category for psychosocial morbidity, which is about 2.5 times that of the national norm. The researchers also found that caregivers reported that children had problems sleeping 56% of the time, and problems related to school (dropping grades, lack of interest, etc.) 14% of the time. Additionally, parents experienced high levels of stress as reported on the Parenting Stress Index (42% of the time) and the Perceived Stress Scale (19% met criteria indicating at risk status). Parental stress was the most significant predictor of the child's psychological functioning during wartime deployment. Children whose parents were younger, had been married for a shorter period of time, and had a lower socioeconomic status were at significantly higher risk of being identified as having psychosocial symptoms by their parents. Other reports from the Rand study found that college level education, military support, and community support were associated with lower levels of children's psychosocial symptoms and parental stress.<sup>15</sup>

More research is needed in this area as this study was unable to determine "if families' emotional experiences across this cycle differ by gender of child, demographic background of the family (e.g., service branch or component), or the length or number of deployments."<sup>16</sup>

### Divorce

Family separation as outlined earlier has other impacts on families, which is evident by the rising military divorce rate. Leaders serving in the military are familiar with the challenges military life may have on marriages, and know that it requires much

work by each partner to sustain a positive relationship due to the high demands associated with being a Soldier, even when not deployed. The additional stress military life brings with it includes relocating to remote areas where normally there are no relatives or friends in close proximity during times of deployments, increasing strain on family members through feelings of abandonment or seclusion. The continued rise in divorce rates is one that is affecting all of the armed forces, but especially families of the Army and Marine Corps. Greg Zoroya from *USA Today* provided the following analysis.

“Enlisted soldiers and Marines divorced their spouses at a higher rate in fiscal year 2008 than at any time in at least 16 years,”<sup>17</sup> and a possible reason for this is increased operational tempo and multiple deployments. Furthermore, senior leaders are becoming more and more concerned as divorce rates increase. “Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has warned that stress among military families remains intense after years of multiple combat deployments and lengthy separations.”<sup>18</sup> In relation to divorce rates, numbers provided by Zoroya claim 4 percent of married enlisted troops in both the Army and Marines, or 8,842 Soldiers and 2,842 Marines, obtained divorces during fiscal year 2008. The data reflect a steady upward trend in divorce among enlisted Soldiers since 2003 and enlisted Marines since 2005. Statistical tables provided by the Pentagon extend back to 1992, and the divorce rate among enlisted Marines and enlisted Soldiers in 2008 was the highest in that 16 year period. There were also nearly 1,000 more divorces among enlisted Soldiers in 2008 than 2007 the data show.<sup>19</sup>

Although divorces may be related to deployments, some service members request to serve on multiple deployments. Each case has its own circumstances, but

financial gain is clearly the most prevalent for service members seeking additional deployment time.

Authors of a recent RAND report examined marriages of service members and found little evidence to support the stress hypothesis (i.e., stressors related to deployment contributing to the dissolution of military marriages); however, they suggest that deployment may impact other aspects of marriage, such as the level of satisfaction with the marriage. It also suggests that the military recruits from populations that may have a higher risk of marital dissolution and have policies in place that encourage military members to marry, such as for health care benefits. Thus, the military may incentivize marriages that individuals would not have otherwise entered. This research is based on the early years of OIF/OEF.<sup>20</sup>

Gene Thomas, a retired Navy Chaplain with over 30 years of pastoral and military experience adds the following comments in regards to divorce rates. “Two major factors that contribute to high military divorce rates are limited financial income on the part of junior enlisted personnel with children and multiple long-term deployments. In addition to encouraging recruits at basic training not to rush into marriage through distribution of such publications as *Marriage and Military Life* and the *Survival Guide for Marriage in the Military*, various proposals have been put forth to lower high military divorce rates. In an article entitled, *Married Teenage Warriors*, Carlton Meyer, the editor of *G2 Mil Quarterly*, traced the history of military compensation and showed how offering family incentives to promote retention likewise encouraged many junior personnel to marry before they were prepared to cope with the challenges of marriage

and military life.”<sup>21</sup> Although additional research is needed, service members deploying to offset their income may play an interesting role in the divorce rate.

Studies have proven that some service members and families believe they can capitalize from deployments and ultimately get ahead financially through the means of multiple deployments. During a focus group study, research identified that financial gain was very important to service members during deployments. “Financial gain was a final significant positive aspect of deployment mentioned by focus group members. Military personnel received additional compensation for serving overseas, including Family Separation Pay, Hostile Fire Pay and some tax exemptions, all of which increase the total income of service members sent on deployments.”<sup>22</sup> Therefore, once the deployment is over all incentives will stop and any increase in lifestyles made possible by the incentives may cause problems in relationships. “For some, the financial incentive was so significant that members commented that they preferred to deploy, considering family separation a manageable price to pay for the additional money. However, some service members were less enthusiastic about the monetary benefit, noting that it was nice to get extra money, but that the money was not enough to make them want to go on deployment.”<sup>23</sup>

Service members serving in the Reserve and National Guard may view incentives in a different light. Incentives may not be enough to offset and compensate the loss of their civilian income, as some give up higher paying jobs to support deployment demands. Deployment in these cases may actually cause family financial hardships. The focus groups also determined that, “although financial benefits of deployments may reduce the pain of such stressors as family separation and long work

hours, they are unlikely to completely eliminate the negative effects of deployment on personnel morale and attitudes.”<sup>24</sup>

The military has taken actions to reduce divorce rates through establishing outreach programs such as Military Life consultants, which can be found on most Army installations. “Recognizing the hardships military life often imposes and the challenges it can place on family relationships, the military services are working to buck societal trends through a full range of outreach programs. The programs are offered through the services of family support, chaplain and mental health counseling networks, and range from support groups for spouses of deployed troops to weekend retreats for military couples.”<sup>25</sup>

Training and understanding of the military lifestyle, coupled with deployment readiness, is vital for family and service members to achieve marital success, and the military is proactively providing that training. Donna Miles from the American Forces Press Service made the following statement. “The programs focus on communication, intimacy and conflict Management, which research shows increases marriage satisfaction and reduces marital challenges.”<sup>26</sup> This also assists in developing a relationship between the service member and their families, prior to deployment, as opposed to trying to establish it while miles away on a deployment. The centerpiece of the Army program is Strong Bonds, a program initiated by commanders and led by chaplains that helps Soldiers and their families build strong relationships. Strong Bonds has four parts: a general couples program, programs tailored for couples preparing for, or returning from, deployments, and programs for families and single Soldiers.<sup>27</sup>

The results of these programs are positive and attendance continues to increase on a yearly basis. Feedback from the program was captured from a participant who attended a Strong Bond session at Fort Sam Houston, who stated the following: "This is the first time since getting back from Iraq in April where I felt that I am capable as well as confident enough to lead my family in a loving and caring environment," he said. "The tools I have learned will serve us a lifetime. This should be mandatory training for all married couples."<sup>28</sup> Chaplain Lieutenant Colonel Carleton Birch from the Army's Chief of Chaplains Office stated that these "programs strengthen the bonds that build resiliency in Army families."<sup>29</sup> The key aspect to remember is when a service member deploys, the entire family deploys. "While praising the benefits these programs offer families, officials said they recognize that strong marital and family relationships make better Soldiers. It also has an important impact on a Soldier's decision to re-enlist, Birch said. Quoting other Army leaders, he said "The Army recruits Soldiers, but retains families."<sup>30</sup>

### Retention

"The relative influence of the stressors and benefits of deployment has several potential consequences for servicemembers' as well as their families. Attitudes and experiences related to deployment may impact servicemembers' decisions to remain in the military."<sup>31</sup> The focus of military senior leaders during the 1990s was to reduce the military force structure while simultaneously transforming to a light, agile and self sustaining force. "In the 1990s, as the active-duty force decreased from 2.1 million to 1.4 million, the number of deployments grew. As a result, deployment rates for

personnel in each service were higher in the 1990s than in the 1980s, and this higher level has continued into the current decade.”<sup>32</sup>

The experiences service members undergo while deployed remain with the service member once they return home to their families. Researchers from the Rand Corporation have conducted studies in a variety of areas in relation to this subject and results show those with positive experiences may be more likely to stay in the service while those who feel physically and emotionally taxed by the service may be more likely to resign. Some service members’ return home from deployment with physical injuries; others return with debilitating psychological or cognitive injuries, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and traumatic brain injury. Researchers also reviewed the consequences of these “invisible” injuries and found that they are often associated with comorbid disorders such as chronic pain, cardiovascular disease, and substance use disorders, increased risk of mortality, and difficulties in maintaining relationships with spouse and children.<sup>33</sup>

There are also physical injuries that accompany service members during deployments which have an effect on families. Stephen Cozza MD, professor of psychiatry at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, Bethesda, Md, comments that combat injury strains not only the individual, but family members as well. There is no such thing as an injured service member; we should be thinking injured family.<sup>34</sup> American hero’s serving in Iraq, Afghanistan, and around the world have made great sacrifices and attained injuries that will affect them and their families for the rest of their lives. “Cozza said most of the injured are young men who once enjoyed physical play with their children. They and their families must adapt to bodily changes and loss

of function. Adults need to prepare children before a first visit with an injured parent, he said. Changes stemming from observable injury, traumatic brain injury, or sequelae of post traumatic stress may confuse children.”<sup>35</sup>

Information obtained when analyzing Army data from a spouse survey, found that length of separation did not predict whether or not the spouse supported the idea of staying in the service; support was determined by whether the spouse thought the pay and benefits were better than in the civilian sector and whether the spouse was satisfied with the amount of family life disruptions they were experiencing.<sup>36</sup>

There are many reasons service members depart the military and each situation is unique. Some depart for medical reasons, family separation, or the desire to do something different. Studies have determined that the impact of deployments on families must be examined in conjunction with the other aspects of military life that disrupt or create conflict within the family. These factors, along with whether the spouse supports a military career, can be good predictors of whether the soldier will remain in the service.<sup>37</sup>

This SRP examined family separation and discussed divorce rates and financial benefits as the leading stresses caused to military families during multiple deployments. It has also addressed training and assistance available to offset those stresses. A 1987 Rand report found that family separation was one of the top five reasons why married Soldiers leave the Army and reported that, based on interview data, too much family separation was the primary reason for Marines in the sample to leave. The survey of Military Personnel conducted by Army Research Institute (ARI) has found that amount of time separated from family has consistently been one of the top reasons that Soldiers



consider leaving the Army.<sup>38</sup> Surely one could argue the facts about the amount of time spent away from families having significant impact on the service member's decision to remain or depart the military. Moreover, extending combat tours from 12 months to 15 months during the recent surge operations in Iraq may have influenced servicemen and women that were "on the fence", to depart the military as well.

In addition, the percentage of Soldiers who identify family separation as the primary reason for leaving the military has increased over the last few years. For example, while about 15% of officers selected this reason in 2001, this increased to 18% in the fall of 2002, 26% in the fall of 2003 and 30% in the fall of 2004. For enlisted Soldiers, about 11% selected this reason in 2001, 14% in the fall of 2002 and 18% in the fall of 2003 and 2004.<sup>39</sup> The all volunteer force has met every challenge head on without failure, but the military must do something to reduce multiple deployments in order to retain its most precious resource, the service member and his or her family.

### Recommendations

The Military should conduct additional studies on the affects that multiple deployments have on service members and their families. Although the military has incorporated great initiatives to support and offset the hardships placed on its service members and families, particularly their impact on divorce, the majority of research stems back to Operation Desert Storm. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are much different than Desert Storm, deployments are more frequent, and tours of duty in combat zones longer. In order to get ahead and properly aid in reducing the stresses associated with multiple deployments, additional studies must be conducted and focused on wars in Iraq and Afghanistan today.

Secondly, Army Regulation 600-20, which governs and mandates the Family Care Plan requirement for Army single and dual military Soldiers only, should be reviewed and modified to reflect a requirement for all military personnel, due to the current and unforeseen future of deployments. Although this change, in most cases, will not affect more senior and seasoned servicemen and women, it could benefit younger service and family members recently introduced to the military lifestyle. Many young service members and their families are scattered and stationed across America and overseas, without additional family members or friends in close proximity and willing to take responsibility for their children or elderly personnel under their charge. This would ensure all service members have the proper paperwork and personnel validated through their leadership to ensure procedures are in place should an emergency arise. It will also reduce additional personnel shortfalls needed to conduct combat operations due to unforeseen family issues that may develop.

Third, there should be a requirement for all married members to attend its Services' training for building strong relationships in marriages. Understanding there is no way to make this mandatory for spouses, the military should strongly encourage participation through funding and providing adequate child care so that service members and their spouses easily attend. Additionally, if leadership is also attending it will initiate a positive response and promote an excellent training experience, one that would be beneficial to all.

Fourth, the United States government should increase the size and properly resource agencies like the State Department, to assist in easing the burden of deployed troops and their families. Those Inter-agencies can pick up additional missions

currently being fulfilled by military personnel. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates made the following comment in regards to increasing the size and capability of the State Department: "I hear all the time from the senior leadership of our Armed Forces about how important these civilian capabilities are. In fact, when Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen was Chief of Naval Operations, he once said he'd hand a part of his budget to the State Department "in a heartbeat," assuming it was spent in the right place. After all, civilian participation is both necessary to making military operations successful and to relieving stress on the men and women of our armed services who have endured so much these last few years, and done so with such unflagging bravery and devotion. Indeed, having robust civilian capabilities available could make it less likely that military force will have to be used in the first place, as local problems might be dealt with before they become crises."<sup>40</sup>

## Conclusion

As the military continues to support operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, military families will continue to face the struggles and challenges associated with multiple deployments. This SRP has examined the affects of multiple deployments, emphasized the impacts they have on families, and listed recommendations to assist in reducing those affects. At the strategic level, balancing the military force structure, maintaining equipment, and properly supporting its family members will not be easy, but if not addressed soon, will have grave affects on the armed forces in the future.

## Endnotes

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<sup>6</sup> Anita Chandra, et al *Understanding the impact of Deployment on Children and Families, Findings from a Pilot Study of Operation Purple Camp Participants*, Working Paper (Santa Monica: RAND, April 2008), 7 [http://www.rand.org/pubs/working\\_papers/2008\\_WR566.sum.pdf](http://www.rand.org/pubs/working_papers/2008_WR566.sum.pdf) (accessed December 8, 2008)

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 15-16.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Chandra, et al *Understanding the impact of Deployment on Children and Families*,13

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.; 53.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.,53

<sup>25</sup> Donna Miles, "Service Programs Strive to Strengthen Military Marriages, Curb Divorce", December 4, 2008 <http://www.defenselink.mil/newsarticle.aspx?id=52194> (accessed December 23, 2008)

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid

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<sup>31</sup> Chandra, et al *Understanding the impact of Deployment on Children and Families*,8.

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Robert M. Gates "Landon Lecture (Kansas State University): Remarks as Delivered by Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, Manhattan, Kansas, Monday, November 26, 2007" <http://www.defenselink.mil/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1199> (accessed February 24, 2009)